

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



A281.8  
EX 82  
Cop. 2

# News and Views

## from the Farm Management Staff

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE  
Division of Agricultural Economics Programs  
Washington 25, D. C.



January 12, 1956

### A Proposed New Year's Resolution

This is the season of the year when we review what we have accomplished in the last year with pride. At this time, too, it is traditional to take a hard look at our problems, and our shortcomings and to make resolutions concerning what we intend to do about them.

Farm management extension workers have much to be proud of during the past year. Among other things, they have played an important role in a major effort on the part of extension to direct its efforts toward assisting farm families in making better decisions in problems of the highest order. As the discipline that treats of the farm unit in its entirety, farm management specialists have been called upon to carry an ever-increasing role in the training of State and county personnel in this approach. Tremendous progress has been made in this effort but much training remains to be done.

While it is not the purpose here to take complete inventory of the needed training, there is one area in particular that presents a challenge to farm management workers. This is the use of the budgeting technique in outlining and studying alternatives that are open for the use of resources in the farm business. Farm families have a right to expect better consideration of their alternatives than is provided by intuition or hunches when their future is at stake. Farm management workers have been using budgeting in some form for years, and most consider it essential to the completion of the decision-making process. This is true whether the problem under consideration is one of a major reorganization of the farm business or whether the problem is the consideration of a new technology.

It seems crucial to the success of this effort that this step which has proved so helpful to farm management workers not be omitted from the decision-making process as it is used by farm and home development workers. Certainly the assistance to farm families cannot be of the quality that is desired unless council is grounded in fact. Yet, budgeting is apparently not being done on a very large scale in the farm and home development activity. This indicates to me that farm management workers have failed to convince county workers of the need and value of budgeting, to train them in the use of the technique, or they have not simplified the procedures and forms to the point where they can be used in the field. Possibly too many of the techniques offered simply provide a place for outlining a course of action already chosen rather than being designed to compare alternatives as a basis for making a choice.

In view of this, it seems of major importance that each State examine the progress in the use of the budgeting technique and the particular deterrents to greater use at present to work out ways of increasing the use of this technique. Simplifying the techniques, using all possible short cuts, may offer a solution for budgeting the total business where major changes are contemplated. Some progress has been made along this line. Partial budgeting is a real possibility and is being used in some areas. This method should be expanded, particularly for budgeting changes that are not major in scope. The budgeting of bench-mark farms by conventional methods or linear programming can give departure points and reduce the amount of budgeting needed. Too, there is a proper stage in planning to bring forth these forms. This is after the family is stimulated to the point where they desire to discover some answers. Looseleaf planning forms have merit. I'm sure there are many more possibilities for your agile minds to explore.

Let's make a New Year's resolution to work on this problem in 1956.

\* \* \*

#### New Ideas and Methods

Tape recordings have been used in New Hampshire as a training device in connection with farm and home development. Recordings are available on interview technique and on farm situations. Information about their use in New Hampshire and availability for loan can be obtained from S. B. Weeks, farm management specialist.

#### Social Security Worksheet

C. C. Moxley of Florida reports that he has found a worksheet to be effective in teaching facts about social security to farm families in group meetings. The form should be an aid in teaching and encouraging families to evaluate their own situation. Mr. Moxley states that it takes about 30 minutes to complete it. This includes the time that is used to discuss and interpret the items. The form is enclosed.

#### Notes on Regional Meetings

The western regional farm management extension meeting was held in Salt Lake City on January 4, 5, and 6. Since many of the western farm management economists are involved in the program projection activity, a subcommittee was set up to study ways of improving farm management and other economic aspects of extension work in program projection. Plans for undertaking the job of appraising handbook materials for farm and home development that are available at present or needed were set up.

#### Social Security and Income Tax

Letters from several extension economists express much interest in the "Farmers' Tax Guide for 1955." Now that this publication is in the hands of county agents and farmers, we are interested in learning how well the Guide is meeting their needs. You may be able to pick up some information on this and can let us know.

Schools or institutes have been held in several States for the presentation of information about income tax and social security. Most of those we have heard



about were 1- or 2-day programs held in centers each serving several counties. Reports indicate these were very successful. More power to you.

The publication "Your Federal Income Tax, 1955" is soon to be available from the printer. We are requesting a supply for each State so that a copy can be sent to each county office of the Extension Service. This is the same procedure followed last year for this publication.

Printing of the proposed bulletin "Farm Tenure and Family Adjustments to Social Security" has been delayed again because of difficulty in clearing the section on benefits and costs of the program to farmers. The facts are all right but there is need for additional information so as to balance the discussion. We shall try to provide you with the new material as soon as it becomes available.

You Should See -

Farm and Home Development Publications - Northeast. We have a few extra copies of two regional publications on farm and home development work in the Northeast. Single copies of either can be supplied on request as long as they last.

One publication is a report by selected counties on the organization of the county program, methods and procedure used, results, and problems arising in farm and home development work. This report is entitled "Some Examples of County Work in Farm and Home Development - Northeastern States."

The other publication is a report of the workshop held in the New England States in July 1955. In addition to a report on phases of the work under way in these States, it also includes a statement by Starley M. Hunter on "Principles of Home Management" and by Owen B. Durgin on "The Interview Process and Decision Making." This report is entitled "Farm and Home Planning Workshop Report - New England States."

Progress in Farm and Home Development. A symposium on the progress of farm and home development was held at the Land-Grant Colleges and Universities 1955 meeting at East Lansing. A copy of a talk given at this meeting by Ernest J. Nesius, Associate Director at Kentucky, is enclosed. In this talk Dr. Nesius reports a survey that he made concerning the progress of farm and home development in nine States. I think you will find his report interesting and challenging reading.

Marketing Costs for Food - Misc. Pub. No. 708, USDA. This publication provides a graphic up-to-the-minute analysis of the farmer's declining share of the consumer's food dollar and the factors that are contributing to this decline. The treatment of the reasons for the increase in the food marketing bill is particularly interesting. Orders are now being shipped to State distribution officers.

Farm Family Business - PA 275, USDA. This publication for 4-H leaders contains much information about farming as a family and the need for all members of the family being aware of and concerned about the financial side of farming. Orders are now being distributed to all States.

How Farm People Accept New Ideas - North Central Regional Publication No. 1 by the Rural Sociology Committee published by Iowa State College as Special Report No. 15. This is a must reading for extension workers. It treats very compre-

hensively the stages that individuals go through in learning about and adopting new ideas. It treats the factors that cause rates of adoption to vary as well as the diffusion process in considerable detail. It is finally valuable in flagging many of the things that the educator must keep in mind as he hopes to effect these processes.

North Central Research on Decision Making. A number of you have asked about the cooperative research in decision making in farm management, carried on by experiment stations in the North Central region. You will find enclosed a copy of "The Interstate Cooperative Research Project on Decision Making in Farm Management," a talk by Glenn L. Johnson of Michigan State University. This talk was made at a conference on values and decision making in home management at Michigan State in July. We think you will find this a helpful statement of what the research is driving at. You will be interested in its relevance to extension work in farm management and to the farm and home unit approach as Johnson sees it.

#### Personnel Changes

Edwin G. Colette has recently come in from county agent work to work as a farm management specialist in Colorado.

Lawrence D. Rhoades of Massachusetts, who has been assisting in farm and home development work, is now extension specialist in farm management, located at Amherst.

Tim Wallace has recently joined the staff at Nevada to do work in farm management extension and research.

Dwight Eddy has been appointed assistant extension economist in Vermont and will be handling farm management work during the absence of Verle Houghaboom.

Ray Murray of Maryland has recently transferred from Agricultural Education to the Extension Service and will be doing research and extension in farm management.

Ed Daniel, farm management extension specialist in Kentucky, is in Washington, D. C., en route to India for 2 years, where he will serve with the ICA Mission staff in New Delhi. Ed's title is that of Production Agricultural Economist and will serve with the Indian Farm Management Branch and the Ministry of Agriculture. Ed's family plans to join him in June. I'm sure that all farm management specialists join us in wishing the Daniels a safe and rewarding trip.

Farm Management and Production Economics Branch

*J. B. Claar*

J. B. Claar, Chief  
E. P. Callahan  
Virgil Gilman

E. A. Johnson  
Jas. L. Robinson  
L. M. Vaughan